

The Crucible, Act I, by Arthur Miller**Grammar and Style: Pronoun Case in Incomplete Constructions**

In an **incomplete construction**—a sentence in which a verb or a preposition is “understood”—it is sometimes difficult to decide what pronoun you need. Mentally completing the sentence will help you decide whether you need the subject or object form of the pronoun.

Abigail seems more sure of herself than *they* [do].

Without the understood verb, it is not always easy to hear that the word *they*, not *them*, is correct.

Reverend Hale is more concerned with witches than [with] *her*.

In this example, the understood word is the preposition *with*, which requires *her*—instead of *she*—as its object.

Remember that subject pronouns serve as the subject of a verb. Object pronouns are objects of prepositions or of verbs.

A. PRACTICE: *Each of the following sentences is an incomplete construction. Above each sentence write the understood word or words and use a caret (^) to show where the word or words should be inserted. Then indicate whether the italicized pronoun form is a subject or an object by writing S or O in the blank provided.*

- ___ 1. Mercy Lewis is concerned about Ruth as well as *her*.
- ___ 2. John Proctor has loyalties to his family and *her*.
- ___ 3. Reverend Parris is at least as worried about himself as *her*.
- ___ 4. The other girls are more frightened than *she*.
- ___ 5. Betty seems in worse condition than *she*.

B. Writing Application: *Circle the pronoun form that correctly completes each sentence. Remember to complete the sentence mentally to help determine the correct form.*

- 1. Mrs. Putnam is more eager than (*they*/*them*) to blame the Devil.
- 2. Reverend Parris is as surprised as (*she*/*her*) that Ruth Putnam also ails.
- 3. Giles Corey is curious about Ruth and (*she*/*her*).
- 4. Mr. Putnam feels himself more intellectually gifted than (*he*/*him*).
- 5. Rebecca Nurse has a calming influence on the adults as well as (*she*/*her*).